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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted in order to determine the specific classroom qualities and characteristics that promote and motivate students to develop attitudes and behaviors conducive to civic participation. One classroom is a bi-lingual sixth grade, located in an older neighborhood school in a coastal southern California city and the other is a predominately white fifth grade in a new neighborhood school in a small Indiana city. These classrooms were studied using observation and participant observation techniques. Data were also collected from interviews with teachers, students, school principals, parents, and social service agencies involved with the target school communities. The study findings generated two main assertions: (1) in classrooms where democratic elements such as providing student choice, shared responsibility, shared decision-making, and deliberate opportunities for student civic participation are present, students begin to accept more responsibility for their immediate community; and (2) when the school principal makes student civic participation a high priority, democratic elements and civic participation becomes more successful. Implications for classroom teachers, educators, and further research are given. Contains 47 references. (MM)

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by Kathryn M. Obenchain

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"An Ethnographic Study of Democratic Citizenship Education in Elementary School: Implications for Social Studies Teacher Education"

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Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the
American Educational Research Association, San Diego, California
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Introduction

For most of our students, many citizenship rights and responsibilities begin well before their 18th birthday and the full rights and privileges of citizenship. The education of citizens, preparing these young people to fulfill the rights and duties of the office, is in part the responsibility of the field of social studies education. Social studies education is often approached through the goal of providing students with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for a productive citizen in a democratic republic. Social studies teacher educators may also consider what knowledge, skills, and attitudes are important in the preparation of social studies teachers.

Social studies education grew out of the Progressive movement and was influenced by the philosophy of John Dewey. Active participation by the citizens of a democratic society was promoted by Dewey, as was his belief that education in such a society must give its citizens a personal stake in their society. Dewey promoted the development of the "habits of mind" (Dewey, 1916/1944, p. 99) to affect necessary social change. Social studies has been charged with the primary responsibility of educating effective democratic citizens (Barr, Barth & Shermis, 1977; Engle & Ochoa, 1988; National Council for the Social Studies, 1992; Parker & Jarolimek, 1984). Effective democratic citizens are defined as citizens who are not just patriotic and law-obeying, but who are also informed critics of the nation and participate in its improvement (Engle

& Ochoa, 1988). According to George Wood (1988, p. 169), democracy is, in essence, "...a way of living in which we collectively deliberate over our shared problems and prospects." In preparation for this deliberation and participation, students must have access not only to content knowledge, but opportunities to critically evaluate and use that knowledge and actively practice citizenship skills. The creation of a democratic and participatory environment within a classroom may be one way of providing experiential citizenship education. In such an environment, students are given a sense of worth and membership through practice opportunities (Angell, 1991).

The primary purpose of this study is that through the description of classrooms that embrace experiential democratic citizenship, it might be possible to better determine what specific qualities and characteristics in these classrooms promote and motivate students to develop attitudes and behavior conducive to civic participation. A secondary purpose of this study is to determine what effects the broader social world in which the classrooms reside have on motivating and promoting civic participation. The guiding research questions developed from an examination of the purposes of this study are:

1. What are the characteristics of an elementary classroom that values civic participation?

    1a. What democratic elements are evident in the classroom structure?

    1b. How do students interact with the teacher and with one another in ways that reflect the democratic nature of the classroom?

    1c. How, and by whom, are opportunities for civic participation introduced?

2. How does the broader social context surrounding these classrooms influence the civic participation of the students?

Although not an initial or primary purpose of this study, an implicit purpose is to inform teachers and teacher educators of what these classrooms look like, how they function, and some key characteristics. It is the intention that this information may inform at the very least and hold implications for how teaching is done at the most.

Relevant Research

There has been little research on civic education methods, particularly on methods related to civic participation (Wade, 1995). For this reason, it becomes necessary to explore related areas of literature. Parker and Kaltsounis (1986) reviewed research related to citizenship and law-related education and found that research in this area generally falls into one of four categories: political socialization, cognitive development, moral development, and classroom climate (p. 16). The research examined for this study focuses on political socialization and classroom climate as they more closely relate to the guiding research questions. Relevant research related to school climate is also discussed.

Political Socialization

Research in political socialization has consistently concluded that the school has a major impact on the political socialization of children (Ehman, 1980; Hepburn, 1983; Hess & Torney, 1967; and Oppenheim, Torney, & Farnen, 1975). A concern, however, is that most of this research is fairly dated. There has been little new research in the political socialization of children in the United States in the last 20 years, partially due to a lack of significant findings and the complexity of the topic (Niemi & Hepburn, 1995; Torney-Purta, 1992). Ehman's (1980) comprehensive review included research from the 1960s and 1970s into political socialization in American schools, and his review continues to be frequently cited in more recent research

(Blankenship, 1990; Hahn & Tocci, 1990) and research reviews (Angell, 1991; Harwood, 1992; Parker & Kaltsounis, 1986; Wade, 1995). Ehman's (1980) review produced seven generalizations that conclude that the transmission of political knowledge occurs through the schooling process; however, political attitudes do not seem to be greatly influenced by a traditional social studies curriculum. An additional conclusion is that the teacher, through the establishment of an open classroom climate, and the school climate itself may positively influence student attitudes and behavior.

As Oppenheim and Torney's (1974, p.13) study of the civic attitudes of children in several nations notes, civic education includes knowledge, but it also includes the aim of "...inculcating certain shared attitudes and values, such as a democratic outlook..." However, citizenship education in the United States has tended to emphasize the "legalistic and structural" (Ichilov, 1990, p. 22) components of government, encouraging the verbal support of democratic principles. This verbal support is seen as obligatory and passive, rather than voluntary and active. This concurs with the research by Torney, Oppenheim, and Farnen (1975) who further conclude that printed drill, stressing facts, and patriotic rituals may have a counter-productive effect on a civic education that wishes to nurture democratic values and political interest. Further, the acquisition of knowledge does not highly correlate with support for democratic values or appear to have an automatic and positive effect toward civic participation.

The acquisition of knowledge, competency in academic disciplines, and a thorough understanding of democratic values (e.g., justice, equality, patriotism) are, however, imperative in order for citizens to make informed decisions (Butts, 1988; Oppenheim & Torney, 1974; Parker & Kaltsounis, 1986; Wade, 1995). Subject matter from the social science disciplines of

history, geography, government, economics, law, anthropology, sociology, psychology, as well as the humanities and the physical and natural sciences are all required in a thorough social studies program. The presentation and study of these and other disciplines should be included for their contributions to the "education of student citizens, rather than as an end in themselves" (Parker & Jarolimek, 1984, p. 7). While the study of these disciplines may not always provide immediately useful information, it should contribute to the body of knowledge required by an informed citizen. The effective and appropriate use of this knowledge and these democratic values as displayed through student behaviors is a necessary and companion focus for citizenship education (Kaltsounis, 1988; Oppenheim & Torney, 1974; Parker & Kaltsounis, 1986).

Classroom Climate

Classroom climate refers to the ways that teaching is carried out and can vary from open climates to closed climates (Ehman, 1980, p. 108) or from democratic to undemocratic (VanSickle, 1983, p.52). Open or democratic climates are characterized as those where students have a voice in both the structure and management of the classroom and are comfortable discussing controversial topics. Closed climate or undemocratic classrooms are those where students do not have these opportunities. Research indicates that students who perceive they are learning in an open classroom climate indicate more positive political attitudes and a stronger sense of political efficacy (Blankenship, 1990; Chilcoat & Ligon, 1994; Ehman, 1980; Hahn & Tocci, 1990; Harwood, 1992; VanSickle, 1983). Positive political attitudes can include specific attitudes toward civil liberties, the democratic process, law, and politicians. Each of these studies profiled found that in a more open or democratic classroom climate, where students believed they were encouraged to participate, to discuss, and to critically think about issues of importance,

student political attitudes were more positive. Students in these classrooms reported a stronger sense of political efficacy; researchers have taken this as evidence of civic participation.

The Role of the Teacher in Classroom Climate

The climate of a classroom is influenced by the make up of students in that classroom, but the teacher is the main agent for establishing the classroom climate, whether it be open or closed (Hepburn, 1983). While there has been research on the teacher and his/her influence in the academic realm, additional research is needed regarding the teacher's influence on the development of social and political attitudes (National Council for the Social Studies, 1992; Solomon, Watson, Delucchi, Schaps, Battistich, 1988). This role of the teacher is important as the implications of this study are discussed in later pages.

Dynneson and Gross (1991) completed field studies which affirm the vital importance of the teacher, along with parents and friends, in the citizenship education process of students. This process, when separate from the traditional curriculum, is often mentioned as part of a hidden curriculum, defined by Beery and Todd (1984, p. 78) as the "set of assumptions that structure personal and social life in the classroom and in the school." Educators agree that teacher behavior and modeling can influence student attitudes and behavior (Beery & Todd, 1984; Hepburn & Radz, 1983; Kubelick, 1982). Some call for the removal of this modeling from a hidden curriculum to a conscious "curriculum of justice" (Power, Higgins, Kohlberg, with Reimer, 1989, p. 24) where the teacher and students deal with real issues relevant to the students in a fair, respectful, and equitable manner.

School Climate

Every teacher and student in a school operates within the context of that school, and the principal is the major factor in establishing school climate (Hallinger & Heck, 1996; Porter, Lemon, Landry, 1989). The principal decides how and if power will be shared and his or her ability and willingness to provide necessary information and resources. This influences school climate, which in turn influences classroom climate (Blase & Blase, 1997; Ehman, 1980). School climate, like classroom climate, operates on a continuum from closed to open (Halpin & Croft, in Hepburn, 1983). A closed climate school is characterized by a closed relationship between teachers who are dissatisfied with their jobs and principals who are impersonal and provide inadequate leadership. The other end of the continuum contains an open climate that is characterized by teachers and principals who work well together to achieve common goals. Teachers work hard, are satisfied, and believe in the goals of their school. Principals in an open climate school are involved and show compassion; he/she provides direction while genuinely sharing leadership with teachers. The leadership styles of principals are an important area to examine, in terms of their effects on school climate, and ultimately classroom climate. Eagly, Karau, and Johnson (1992) conducted a meta-analysis of 50 studies of the leadership styles of principals. Predictions for this study were in line with gender stereotyping; "to the extent that male and female principals carry out their roles in a manner consistent with gender stereotypes, they would differ in leadership styles" (pp. 79-80). Results from the meta-analysis indicate gender differences in leadership style are evident in democratic versus autocratic styles. The findings suggest that female principals are more democratic than male principals. They are "more likely than men to treat teachers and other organizational subordinates as colleagues and equals and to

invite their participation in decision-making" (p. 91). This suggests that male principals are less collaborative and more dominating than female principals. Shakeshaft concurs, stating that women view the job of principal as more of "a master-teacher or educational leader whereas men more often view the job from a managerial-industrial perspective" (1987, p. 173).

In addition to the principal, the demands of the school curriculum, parents, and other administrators have an effect on the classroom climate. VanSledright and Grant's (1994, p. 309) analysis of three elementary classrooms found certain "impediments" to teaching citizenship education in elementary schools. They conclude that as long as teachers share curriculum and learning decisions with parents and administrators, teachers lose their autonomy and may be unable to directly involve students in a meaningful and responsible way if the teacher's decisions are not compatible with those of parents, administrators, and teachers. It may be inferred that teachers who desire to promote an open climate, with a focus on decision-making and critical thinking opportunities, may be impeded by curriculum, parents, and/or administrators whose goals are different. Goodman (1992) concurs with this statement, including not only classrooms striving to be more democratic, but schools as well.

John Dewey (1916/1944) stated that if a society wanted to be truly democratic in its processes, it must provide an education which would prepare citizens to flourish in such a democracy. Such an education must provide students ample opportunities to learn the knowledge, develop the attitudes, and practice the skills necessary. It is hoped that all of these will assist a person in developing the dispositions which are positive in a democratic society. Lyon and Russo (1980, p. 18) state that "...there is a critical need not just for the declarative knowledge that informs, but also for the procedural knowledge that enables individuals to

transform knowledge and concern to purposeful action." Unfortunately, research in participatory civic education is extremely scant. The related research in political socialization and classroom climate available generally supports Dewey's assertions for the need for knowledge, attitudes, and skills. What is important to note in this research is that just knowledge, or just attitudes, or just skills, is not sufficient; students need a civic education that addresses all of these components. This study intends to inform teachers and teacher educators what this civic education may look like in elementary classrooms.

Methodology

According to Lincoln and Guba (in Denzin & Lincoln, 1994), a paradigm is a world view; a belief system based on ontological, epistemological, and methodological assumptions that are accepted by the inquirer on faith. This paradigm provides the theoretical setting for the study as it contains beliefs from which the researcher determines a topic, questions, and methods. In this study, the researcher is interested in participatory citizenship and the educational experiences that may promote it. The research questions are intended to help understand what it is like to be a member of a democratic classroom community. In determining the inquiry paradigm for this study, it was necessary to ask questions about the researcher's ontological, epistemological, and methodological assumptions. Answering these questions led to two very related theoretical frameworks that support this study: constructivism and interpretivism. Both of these frameworks hold that in order "...to understand this world of meaning one must interpret it" (Schwandt, 1994, p. 118). Both frameworks also support the goal of understanding the world of the participants from their point of view. A constructivist/interpretivist perspective indicates that a "qualitative-naturalistic-formative approach" (Patton, 1990, p. 53) is the most suitable where,

among others the researcher is exploring the effects of a particular program or environment n the participants.

In preparation for this study, a pilot study was conducted in the fifth-grade classroom with a teacher who is also a participant in the full study in the year prior to the full study (Obenchain, 1996). An important purpose of the pilot study was to determine appropriate data collection strategies, interview formats, and the researcher's role. The pilot study included approximately 27 hours of classroom observations, as well as interviews with both students and the classroom teacher. From the analyses of this data, an observation and artifact collection strategy, and interview guides and questions were formulated for the full study.

Primary data collected for this full study includes fieldnotes and semi-structured interviews with the participating teachers and group interviews with the participating students. Secondary data consists of semi-structured interviews with the school principals, parents, and social service agencies in the communities. Additional secondary data consists of archival data and site artifacts that were used to support or dispute the primary data. Collecting a variety of data from a variety of sources and using different methods of collection contributes to data triangulation.

Most of the data was collected during the 1996-1997 school year, primarily during the fall semester. A total of 39 school days were observed with participant interviews taking place both within and outside of that time frame. The researcher assumed the role of both participant observer and observer for this study. Participation as opposed to just observation status was necessary because of the ethnographic nature of the study (Patton, 1990). As a participant observer, the researcher became immersed in the culture [the two classrooms] which was necessary in order to understand what was going on in these cultures.

Both within- and cross-case analyses were used to analyze the multiple sources of data as the researcher inductively looked for patterns, themes, and categories (Patton, 1990). Both the primary and secondary data were subject to analysis that was done with all of the data from both cases, and then on a case by case (classroom by classroom) basis. Data was analyzed informally on a day to day basis during data collection phase and that allowed the researcher to constantly compare previously collected data to new data. The more formal data analysis that began after the data collection phase was completed allowed the researcher to see the emergence of five main categories of concepts that guided the development of the study's assertions.

The two elementary classrooms in this study are those belonging to Mr. L. and Mrs. R.[1] The bi-lingual sixth-grade classroom of Mr. L is located in a an older neighborhood school (Las Flores Elementary School) in a coastal Southern California city. Mrs. R.'s predominately white fifth grade classroom is located in a new neighborhood school (Lindberg Elementary School) in a small Indiana city. Mr. L. and Mrs. R., and their classes, were chosen to participate in this study because of the teachers' commitment to a citizenship education component in his or her classroom. This commitment was determined in part through the participation of the teachers in a two-week intensive summer institute on citizenship education at Purdue University in 1995. Commitment was further determined by each teacher's continuing focus on citizenship education through the 1995-1996 school year, elements of democracy in the classroom, and an interest in participating in the study. Although the teachers in this study are similar in age, teaching experience, and a commitment to citizenship education, they are unique individuals in very different settings. They live and teach in different geographic and ethnic communities, and work with very different principals.

Findings

This study generated two main assertions that encompass five general categories. One, *in classrooms where democratic elements such as providing student choice, shared responsibility, shared decision-making, and deliberate opportunities for student civic participation are present, students are beginning to accept more responsibility for their immediate community.* This assertion attends to the first guiding research question (and the sub-questions) of the study. Assertion two states that *when the school principal makes student civic participation a high priority, as opposed to a low priority, those classrooms striving to include democratic elements and civic participation have more success with the inclusion.* This assertion more directly addresses the second guiding research question.

Assertion One includes the four separate categories of student choice, shared responsibility, shared decision-making, and opportunities for civic participation. Allowing multiple opportunities for student choice is evident in both classrooms under study and is offered to students either deliberately or with less deliberate intentions. Deliberate choice includes those times when the teacher creates a situation that requires student choice and/or those opportunities where the teacher's choice of words specifically presents a choice to students. An example of deliberate choice includes Mrs. R.'s use of a Seating Preference Form that allows students to have a choice in where and with whom they would like to sit in the classroom. Mrs. R. encourages thoughtful choice in this situation by including statements such as "These are people who might distract me if I sit by them. These are people who will probably encourage me to do my best work if I sit by them." More typical examples of deliberate choice are those in which the teacher offers students choice in their class work. Choices are structured (doing nothing is not acceptable); an

example is Mr. L.'s presentation of two options for students to present their findings on a study of Ancient Greece. Less deliberately structured opportunities for choice also occur often in both classrooms and tend to consist of comments to individual students. These choices are presented very casually and without a deliberate tone. Mr. L. often uses this manner in discussing the classroom jobs students hold. Students are asked to set up tutoring and gardening schedules with the direction of "Do whatever you think is best" and "I'll leave it up to you." Options for assignments such as writing utensil, length, and presentation style also occur without a deliberate presentation. Note that in some cases students do not recognize these less deliberately presented choices as choices.

The second category that emerges is that of shared responsibility that differs from student choice in the way it is presented to students. Shared responsibility is presented in much more of a sense of community spirit than individually. In this category, the teacher and students share the responsibility in keeping the classroom running smoothly, helping themselves and one another learn, and accepting responsibility for others in the community.

Creating a sense of community is central to this category of shared responsibility. Students are asked to monitor themselves and to accept responsibility for others and provide assistance when needed because they are all members of the same community. Both teachers attempt to create this sense of community in a variety of ways, including deliberate community building activities that encourage students to learn more about classmates and to trust one another.

A specific example of shared responsibility includes Mrs. R's. use of a mini-economy with student held classroom jobs to help her classroom run smoothly. Students apply and interview for

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these jobs early in the year and they appear to understand that their jobs are important to the classroom and that they are preparation for adulthood. Every interview conducted with Mrs. R.'s students included comments regarding a sense of responsibility and helping the classroom run more smoothly. Two students in Mrs. R.'s classroom spoke of their jobs of recycler and bank teller. Wayne stated that if there was no recycler, "The recycling bin would be all filled up and be overflowing like a dump." Garth pointed out that if there was no bank teller, "you wouldn't get your money, you wouldn't pay your rent..." Samantha, another of Mrs. R.'s students sums it up by saying, "...you can't just lean back and let everybody else do the work if you're a good citizen, you have to help out." Mr. L.'s students also share responsibility for the classroom but in much less structured way than the mini-economy of Mrs. R.'s classroom. As a particular task arises, Mr. L. may ask for student assistance. Students in Mr. L.'s classroom do not see this shared responsibility as something important and did not mention it in any interview. The researcher suspects that helping out in the classroom is a typical occurrence for elementary students but without the structure of a mini-economy or some other type of system, the impact is missing, as well as the potential to encourage responsibility.

With an overall goal of community, both Mr. L. and Mrs. R encourage shared responsibility for helping themselves (students), their classmates, and the teacher learn. Checking one's behavior and use of time are used consistently by both teachers and done by implying a responsibility to learn. Mr. L. may ask his students to "take stock of what you have accomplished in the last 15 minutes." Quotes from the class constitutions present in both rooms, "being the best learner you can be" and "We will do our work without bothering others" support this sense of shared responsibility. Offering assistance to and asking for help from neighbors is also

encouraged in both classrooms. In one example, Mr. L. was teaching a math concept that was difficult for many of his students. He tried a variety of verbal, physical, and written clues to help the students and when they began to understand he asked them to "explain the concept to a neighbor" and "make a suggestion to your neighbor" to help them understand.

This sense of responsibility to others in the community goes beyond the classroom community to include the larger school and geographic community. It is discussed separately because it does not deal with academic learning behaviors. This particular sub-category of shared responsibility was observed only in Mrs. R.'s classroom and typically consisted of reminders by Mrs. R. or students of a responsibility to others. This attitude was also reinforced in the student written class constitution. An example provided by Mrs. R. was her reminder to the fifth-graders to be responsible for the younger children on a particularly icy day as school was dismissed.

Shared decision-making is the third category in Assertion one and is present in both classrooms. This category is similar to shared responsibility, however shared responsibility is characterized by a focus on attitude. Shared decision-making is seen as more of a behavior or skill to be practiced.

While occasions in which the teacher shared decision-making with the students did not occur frequently, the importance of those occasions may carry more weight. The most notable shared decision in both classrooms is the establishment of classroom rules. Both teachers took a significant amount of time with their student during the first week of school to establish classroom rules. In both classes, this process began by asking students what would be the best environment in which they could all learn. This student involvement in rule-making was mentioned by the students in the majority of student interviews (nine of ten). Mr. L.'s students brought this up

when asked if the students thought they had a say in their classroom. Mrs. R.'s students brought up the making of the class constitution when asked what was unique about their classroom and/or did they think they had a say in their classroom.

Students in both classrooms also partake in what is called academic shared decision-making. Although this looks different in each class, it consists of student input in academic decisions, such as helping to choose appropriate assessment criteria for certain assignments, becoming a participant in the assessment of their own work, and coming to class consensus on a variety of academic decisions. Mrs. R. also encouraged shared decision-making for the good of the classroom. These were decisions of a somewhat non-academic nature and focuses on community decisions. Examples included student input and suggestions on the daily or weekly schedules and how the room is physically arranged. As Mrs. R. states, "I want them to get used to discussing issues, finding alternatives, listening to other people's ideas and then as a group having to decide which approach we're going to take."

The fourth category in assertion one describes those instances in which the teacher deliberately created an opportunity for students to become participants in civic life. Service learning, a "method by which young people learn and develop through active participation...[to] meet actual community needs" (Alliance for Service-Learning in Education Reform) is the method to which both teachers subscribe. There are a variety of service-learning-type projects present in both classrooms and one common project is working with a younger buddy class. Mr. L.'s sixth graders are paired with a second grade class for a weekly one on one reading time. Mrs. R.'s fifth graders are paired with a kindergarten class for weekly computer sessions. What may be the most interesting result from the cross case analysis of this particular category is the difference in

attitude toward working with the buddy class displayed by students in the two different classes. Only one-half of the students interviewed in Mr. L.'s class mentioned that they enjoyed working with the younger students, and one student, Ralph, resented the time away from his own class. This is a contradiction to Mrs. R.'s students where four-fifths of the students interviewed said they enjoyed the experience and were able to provide a rationale for being a buddy (i.e. they need our help). One important difference may be in how this civic opportunity was introduced to the different classes. Mr. L. introduced this as a task (which is not pure service-learning as students did not assist in determining the need). Students saw this as another chore, another assignment. Mrs. R. introduced the buddy class in a different way, as an opportunity to solve a problem. Although she knew this was the project she wanted to pursue, her approach allowed the students to perceive that they were creating this opportunity to serve. Mrs. R. began the conversation with her students by saying, "Mrs. G. needs some help and she was telling me about a problem she has [teaching kindergartners basic computer skills by herself], I wondered if we could help her solve it?" Students were able to become a part of the process by realizing that they knew about computers, and they could be of real service to Mrs. G. and her students. Mrs. R. deliberately created the opportunity and set the stage for student involvement.

In summary, assertion one focuses on the climate that the teacher sets in the classroom by allowing students to become important stakeholders in decisions that are important to them. It appears that the more deliberate these opportunities for choice, shared responsibility, and decision-making are, the more students are aware of the opportunities.

Assertion two deals with the influence of the school principal on the success teachers and classrooms may have when striving to include democratic elements and civic participation.

Although the importance of the principal was always assumed, the influence that the two principals in this study had was larger than expected. Mr. Valdez is the principal at Las Flores Elementary School (Mr. L.'s school) and Dr. Simmons is the principal at Lindberg Elementary School (Mrs. R.'s school) and these two principal have distinctly different styles of leadership that appear to support the research cited earlier regarding gender differences. Mr. Valdez appears to be more authoritarian than democratic in his leadership style, and Dr. Simmons appears to be more democratic than authoritarian in her leadership style. Mr. Valdez's goals for his school are safety and achievement, and he speaks of "pushing" and "put[ting] a little pressure" on his teachers to meet his goals. While he states that he supports citizenship education, his actions indicate that it is a low priority. For a variety of reasons, adherence to rules and improved test scores are a bigger priority. Mr. L. believes this limits his efforts in citizenship education, "...there is also a lot of pressure from the district and principal to accomplish a high level of skill - testing skill development and practice - rote practice of skills that take a lot of time..."

Dr. Simmons, the principal at Mrs. R.'s school lists curriculum and instruction as her priorities. To clarify, Dr. Simmons wants the curriculum to be dynamic and reflective of the latest research. Instruction includes her support of a variety of strategies and resources that she believes allows her teachers to become guides in the classroom. Democratic citizenship education is a "best practice" that Dr. Simmons supports; and observations concur. There are a variety of decisions in the school that are made with the input and voice of both teachers and students. Dr. Simmons works to share power with her staff, encouraging them to take on leadership roles, believing her teachers will feel a sense of pride and commitment to the school. One example occurred during the design phase of the new school building, during which time the teachers

participated with the architect in the physical design of the school. Mrs. R. sees no barriers to her citizenship education program from Dr. Simmons, and believes the only barriers for her are those presented by some particular behavioral concerns of some of her students.

Discussion

Accepting Community Responsibility

Reflecting Dewey's (1916/1944) belief that education should give students a "personal interest" (p. 99) or personal stake in their community, the elementary students in the two classrooms under study are beginning to accept responsibility for their respective communities. The communities they are most interested in are the classroom community and the school community, which are appropriate for the ages of these students according to the citizenship development theory of Dynneson and Gross (1991). This acceptance of responsibility has occurred because Mr. L. and Mrs. R. have created an environment which encourages this interest through deliberate and structured classroom opportunities, and students are beginning to form commitments to their community.

Both of the classrooms in this study contain a variety of democratic elements, and may be considered more democratic than less democratic. Very few classrooms are completely democratic; rather, they tend to operate on a continuum from more democratic to less democratic (VanSickle, 1983, p. 52). A more democratic classroom philosophy is consistent with the beliefs and practices of both Mr. L. and Mrs. R. who believe that as the trained professional in the classroom, there are certain decisions that must be made by the teacher. Although both teachers believe that it is very important to provide democratic experience in the classroom, neither teacher believes that his or her classroom should be completely democratic. By providing real and

meaningful student choice, shared responsibility, shared decision-making, and deliberate opportunities for civic participation, these two teachers have created more democratic classrooms. There are differences between Mr. L. and Mrs. R. in how some of these democratic elements are presented and introduced. This appears to affect the degree to which the students believe they are involved in the classroom (i.e., that it is democratic). This difference appears to account for much of the difference in perceptions.

Choice, shared responsibility, shared decision-making, and deliberate opportunities for civic participation occurred consistently in both of the classrooms under study. However, these democratic elements appeared with more structure and deliberate intent in Mrs. R.'s room than in Mr. L.'s room. The students in Mrs. R.'s classroom are also more aware of their responsibilities than the students in Mr. L.'s classroom. The characteristics of structure, common vocabulary, and repetition seem to be significant in the differences between these two classrooms.

The first characteristic, the presence of structured opportunities, occurred more frequently and with more structure in Mrs. R.'s classroom than in Mr. L.'s classroom. The mini-economy is one example of this structured opportunity. It is a very concrete and deliberately staged opportunity for students to experience life as a citizen with the responsibilities of a job and the benefits and responsibilities of a salary. Students may experience the consequences of not performing their job well. They may lose their job and others in the community may suffer because of their failings. Structure also occurs in both classrooms as specific opportunities for choice are created by the teacher.

A second characteristic, a common vocabulary, may also be important. Related to structure, a common vocabulary is used by both teachers with their classes. Both teachers refer to

the classroom as a community, to community members, and to responsibility to the community. Both teachers also refer to the core democratic values, although Mrs. R. more consistently uses the values with her students in conversation and across disciplines. The values of justice, common good, individual rights, patriotism, truth, diversity, and equality of opportunity are a part of the daily vocabulary and they are visible in the classroom on student created posters. Mrs. R. consistently uses these terms in academic discussions with her students and in matters of classroom management. If students are talking disruptively, Mrs. R. does not say, "Be quiet." Rather, she says, "Your talking is infringing upon the individual right of Katrina [or whomever] to study."

Repetition is the third characteristic more frequently present in Mrs. R.'s classroom than in Mr. L.'s classroom. Repetition is certainly related to structure and a common vocabulary as Mrs. R. repeatedly and consistently offers structured opportunities and uses a common vocabulary with her students.

Influence of the School Principal

The school principal is an undeniably important factor in every elementary school; and the influence of the two principals in this study seems to intensify the experience in the two classrooms. Dr. Simmons' more democratic leadership style and her support of democratic citizenship education encourage Mrs. R. to include those elements. Further, Dr. Simmons' support of democratic citizenship education is evidenced by her use of the vocabulary introduced by Mrs. R. throughout the school.

Mr. Valdez's demonstrated priorities on safety and achievement, as well as his more authoritarian style of leadership, has discouraged Mr. L. from implementing some of the

democratic elements he would like to include. This may also explain the presence of fewer deliberately structured opportunities in Mr. L.'s classroom, as compared to Mrs. R.'s classroom. The school climate is decidedly less open at Las Flores. This may lessen the opportunity for students to see repetition and a common vocabulary outside of the classroom. If this is true, democratic elements are not consist throughout the school, and the opportunity for consistent reinforcement is missing.

Implications

This study helps to fill an acknowledged void in civic education research and is important for that reason. Researchers have stated a need for research in civic education, particularly in classroom based studies (VanSledright & Grant, 1994; Wade, 1995). Much of the previous research has relied on self-reporting measures, such as surveys and questionnaires (Blankenship, 1990; Hahn & Tocci, 1990; Oppenheim, Torney, & Farnen, 1975). This type of research may not allow the researcher to see what occurs in the lives of these students that makes them respond with their particular answers. Sehr (1997, p. 86) specifically calls for studies which utilize "...qualitative research methods such as open-ended interviews and educational ethnography...[in order to] gain insight into the structures and processes of democratic schooling, and students' responses to their educational experience..."

Classroom Teacher

There are implications for the classroom teacher who is interested in democratic citizenship education, and wishes to prepare participatory democratic citizens. The following section contains suggestions based on the conclusions of this study.

- Democratic knowledge, skills, and attitudes are all necessary in a strong citizenship program. A combination of all of these should be present, and included in a meaningful and interconnected manner.
- The citizenship program should also be presented in an interdisciplinary manner and infused throughout the curriculum. Wraga (1993) supports interdisciplinary citizenship education by discussing the need for citizens (i.e., students) to integrate the knowledge of several subjects.
- Elementary students do not seem to commit to democracy when it is presented passively. A passive presentation of democracy would include democratic knowledge, but few opportunities for a "lived process of participation" (Wood, p. 170). Opportunities to use the knowledge, skills, and attitudes must be presented with structure, deliberately and repeatedly. It is hoped that this will encourage the "habits of mind" promoted by Dewey (1916/1994, p. 99).
- Community in classrooms is important. First, a real sense of community is essential. Second, democratic classrooms do promote community responsibility. Teachers wishing to encourage community and community responsibility should share the classroom with their students. Allowing students to become responsible in the classroom through rule-setting, classroom jobs, choice in assignments, etc., encourages responsibility to that classroom community. Students who have helped to set the environment for the classroom are more committed to the success of that classroom. As demonstrated by both teachers in this study, setting the classroom environment involves more than just rule-setting. Learning to care about one another and the classroom is nurtured through modeling and positive reinforcement.

- Students who participate in assessment of their academic work and who reflect on their classroom behavior appear to be more responsible in those areas. Teachers who want to encourage responsibility may wish to share assessment with their students, and to encourage reflection on classroom behavior.
- Democratic classrooms include the discussion of controversial issues. Taking this further, the encouragement of the civil discussion of issues should become a part of these classrooms. Lappe and DuBois (1994, p. 239) provide a list of "Ten Arts of Democracy," which includes, among others, active listening, mediation, negotiation, public dialogue, and evaluation and reflection.
- For those teachers who wish to nurture and encourage active democratic citizens, it may be in their best interest, when possible, to find administrators who are supportive of the teacher's goals. "Islands of democracy" (Goodman, 1992, p. 179) can survive, but to provide the repetition and common vocabulary recommended, a supportive principal is essential.
- A final suggestion or implication for teachers would be for them to participate in a program, class, or institute that would encourage them to develop an appropriate citizenship education program for their setting. The two teachers in this study participated in the same institute and believed that the experience gave them a more clear understanding, a stronger vocabulary, and a more coherent vision of democratic citizenship education.

Teacher Educators

The implications for teacher educators differ little from the implications for teachers. The challenge for teacher educators is to provide, encourage, and nurture a commitment to democratic education through the university experience.

- It is essential to provide pre-service teachers exposure to theory and research on democratic education to increase their knowledge and understanding.
- As I would encourage teachers to provide meaningful citizenship opportunities, the same is true for teacher educators who wish to encourage a commitment to citizenship education. Provide pre-service teachers with consistent, meaningful, and relevant opportunities to create the climate of their classroom and to serve their respective communities, specifically service-learning.

Suggestions for Further Research

For me, this study has created many additional questions needing exploration. The following suggestions are the most apparent.

1. Although this study helps to fill the need for qualitative and classroom based studies on civic participation, other qualitative classroom studies are certainly needed to support or challenge the findings of this study. Studies are needed at all grade levels to provide a comprehensive body of literature and to generate the grounded theory desired by VanSledright and Grant (1994).
2. This study began with the assumption that democratic citizenship is a goal of schooling in the United States. However, as a very diverse nation, it may be important to study the interpretation of this goal with some of the diverse populations of our nation and how that may or may not affect citizenship education. This suggestion comes specifically from one interview comment made by Junior, an Hispanic student of Mr. L.'s. As we talked about the class constitution and rules, Junior was the only student to say that students should not have a role in making classroom decisions and he believes it is the sole responsibility of the teacher.

It is important to explore if participatory democratic citizenship education is more of a challenge in certain schools because a particular culture may be less supportive of democratic citizenship education.

3. Longitudinal studies to ascertain if the experiences in the elementary or middle grades influence adult civic behavior are also needed. This would be even more meaningful if students had consistent democratic citizenship education throughout their schooling. If these students were followed through school in order to monitor their citizenship development, with later follow-up studies, more insight into the effects of citizenship education may be discovered. This will continue to be a challenge as traditional schooling is a decidedly undemocratic affair. Goodman (1992, p. 179) refers to the presence of "islands of democracy" in schools and communities. There is a need for further exploration to determine if one or two years on such an "island" is sufficient. Or, are multiple and concurrent experiences necessary? Common sense may tell us the latter (more and concurrent) is more desirable; is it possible, given the current structure of schools?
4. Longitudinal studies may also be important to address the concerns of previous political socialization research. The students in this study are younger than students in most previous studies, and whether or not early civic experiences will be of long term benefit is inconclusive. It is believed that the knowledge gained paired with active participation while still a child/adolescent may promote adult civic participation, although research evidence has been inconclusive, especially with younger children. Niemi and Hepburn (1995, p. 9) conclude that this is due to the fact that "...attitudes and behavior change throughout life...and that early learning is of limited consequence for adult political behavior."

5. Conclusions in this study indicate that students can develop a sense of ownership of their classroom. Secondary schools provide a unique challenge as students and teachers generally do not have the same amount of time to build this community and sense of ownership. Additional studies in secondary or departmentalized settings are recommended to determine their potential for success. It may also be prudent to examine how different scheduling formats, like block schedules, may be used to enhance democratic citizenship education at the middle and secondary levels.
6. Students in these two classrooms are strongly encouraged to cooperate with one another. In the classroom methodology, cooperation for the common good is seen as important, and a higher goal than competition. Research to explore whether or not competition is contrary to citizenship education is of interest and recommended.

Limitations

As with all studies, this one includes limitations. These limitations occurred primarily because of trade-offs and time limitations. Studying two classrooms may contribute to generalizability, but with only one researcher, time and detail in both classrooms is limited by the need to spend time in the other. There was also a lack of depth in examining the social context of the classrooms under study. The selection of a few students in each class to be key informants may have provided more information about the social context of the schools. One final limitation to note revolves around the influence of the school principal. While the influence was not a surprise, the intensity of the influence found was a surprise. Additional interviews and information about these two principals may have strengthened Assertion Two.

Conclusion

There is so much potential for additional research in the field of civic education that it may seem overwhelming. If social studies educators truly believe that democratic citizenship education which combines the knowledge, skills, and attitudes is our goal, we must conduct and support the research that will help us to determine what are appropriate types of democratic citizenship education. Prior research has concluded that the traditional social studies curriculum is effective in transmitting knowledge, but not the attitudes and skills (Ehman, 1980). What then is more appropriate than the traditional curriculum? An important and related question for teacher educators is to ask how the conclusions of this research will affect how we teach our pre-service teachers. This research has discussed the importance of creating a democratic classroom climate if one wishes to encourage community and civic responsibility. Do teacher educators then model this approach in their classrooms? Mrs. R. certainly believes she must "walk the walk" of democracy with her students. It is difficult to believe that teacher educators should do any less.

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Note:
[1] Pseudonyms are used in this study for the names of the participating students, teachers, school principals, schools, and cities.